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One for the books

Rutland college celebrates its new \$1 million library

After five years of renovations, the library at the College of St. Joseph looked like a million bucks during the official unveiling Monday.

The Rutland college showed off its new and improved facility, made possible by \$1 million in donations, during a celebration attended by about 100 contributors, local politicians, business leaders and others.

"This project couldn't have been done without help from the community," CSJ President Frank Miglorie said during opening remarks. "We have all of you and many others to thank."

Of all the contributors, Mary Giorgetti of Rutland did the most to help the college carry through on its plans, Miglorie said. The renovated library was named the Giorgetti Library to honor its biggest benefactor.

"Mary enabled us to move forward," he said. "We're grateful for her support."

The money donated by Giorgetti and others helped to transform the old, 9,620-square-foot library into the 15,000-square-foot space it is today.

Along with the extra room, the college added a mezzanine, elevator, new lighting and ventilation, a student computer laboratory and three floor-to-ceiling windows on the south wall.

The space little resembles the gymnasium it was years ago.

"We've been at it for five years, upgrading our computer access and resources and installing databases, along with all the other physical plant improvements," Miglorie said.

The library renovations represented the third and final stage of 10 years and \$6 million worth of improvements on the campus, including construction of a new athletic and student center.

The library's transformation impressed Gov. James Douglas, who spent most of the day traveling back and forth between Rutland and Springfield.

Returning to a theme he touched on earlier in the day during a legislative breakfast in Rutland, the governor told listeners that Vermont needed aggressive strategies for keeping its graduates and post-graduates from seeking their fortunes beyond the state's borders.

Projects like the ones completed at CSJ were an essential first step in that process, he said, because they allowed high school graduates to seek a quality education close to home.

"You're a great model," Douglas said. "I hope other institutions will be as successful in the future."

Mayor John Cassarino also took the podium Monday, focusing his praise on philanthropists like Giorgetti.

"Projects like this need guardian angels," he said. "Most people call them philanthropists, but I think they're guardian angels. ... It's amazing to me what the community has done with this college. Whatever people give to a project like this, they get back a thousand-fold."

Like Douglas, the mayor said the college was vital for training the local workforce of the future. He pointed out that half of the CSJ's graduates continue to live and work in the Rutland area.

Sen. James Jeffords, I-Vt., couldn't attend the celebration, Migliorie said, but he sent his regards and something to add to the library's collection.

"He unfortunately couldn't be here, but he said he wanted to be the first to donate a book to the new library," the college president said. "He sent us a personally autographed edition of 'My Declaration of Independence.'"